



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114-2119

Mitt Romney
GOVERNOR

Kerry Healey
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Stephen R. Pritchard
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

For Immediate Release
July 21, 2006

Contact: Vanessa Gulati
617-727-1119

AYER CELEBRATES THE RE-OPENING OF SANDY POND BEACH

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Secretary, Stephen R. Pritchard, Congressman Martin Meehan, Senator Pam Resor and Representative Robert Hargraves celebrated the re-opening of Sandy Pond Beach after the recent completion of renovations. The renovations to the small beach and recreation area in the Town of Ayer were funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Local area residents are happy to see that this project, which was recommended nearly 6 years ago, has been completed for the summer.

The new amenities include:

- Access for people with disabilities
- A new tot lot
- New play equipment
- Installation of a new picnic area
- A new volleyball court
- Renovation to the basketball court
- Additional parking

This is the first grant funded project in the Town of Ayer in 10 years. The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund provides up to 50% of the total project cost for the acquisition, development and renovation of park, recreation and conservation areas. The partners responsible for meeting the matching funds are the Community Preservation Committee, the Parks Commission and the Disabilities Commission. The Fund allows municipalities, special districts and state agencies to apply. Since 1965 Massachusetts has received \$90.5 million from the state side portion of the federal program to renovate hundreds of parks and acquired nearly 4,000 acres of land.

“The Land and Water Conservation Fund along with the efforts of all our partners have made an enormous difference here. The beach and the new amenities look amazing. I

know families will enjoy this recreation area throughout the summer months,” said Secretary Pritchard.

"I am happy to see that Ayer received this money to restore the recreation site at Sandy Beach. It is always great to see Federal money and State money coming together to help support initiatives that provide important services like this."

In FY 2006 the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs spent \$34 million to protect 6,823 acres of land and restore 41 urban parks in 32 cities and towns. The fund has also allowed for the completion of a new Open Space Analysis model for Holyoke, Lawrence and Worcester, added 51,000 acres to the Forest Stewardship Program in the past 3 ½ years, and has awarded 12 Forest Viability grants. The fund also was able to accomplish a total of 140 projects in 2006, which included 26 Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) park projects, 28 Department of Fish and Game (DFG) habitat projects, 5 grants to help Land Trust protect 60 acres of unique habitat, and reviewed, edited and approved 137 Conservation Restrictions of 3,417 acres of land.

For more information on the Land and Water Conservation Fund please visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/landwater/default.htm>.

###